

Federal government launches the Canada Emergency Response Benefit

On March 25, 2020 the federal [COVID-19 Emergency Response Act](#) received Royal Assent, enacting legislation to establish the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to provide temporary income support to certain individuals.

On April 6, 2020, the federal government launched the CERB program.

On April 15, 2020, the program's eligibility criteria were relaxed to extend CERB to a larger pool of individuals, including a provision allowing for limited earnings while in receipt of CERB benefits.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) applications opened on April 6, 2020 for benefits covering the period between March 15, 2020 and April 11, 2020 with applications open for the four-week period from April 12, 2020 to May 9, 2020, starting April 13, 2020.

Benefits

As temporary income support, the CERB provides eligible workers who have lost their employment income due to the COVID-19 pandemic with a taxable benefit of \$2,000 per a four week period, and for a total duration of up to sixteen weeks.

Eligibility criteria

The CERB is available to workers who meet all of the following conditions:

- Live in Canada and are at least fifteen years of age;
- Have stopped working because of COVID-19;
- Have not voluntarily quit their job;
- Do not receive Employment Insurance (EI) regular or sickness benefits;
- Do not receive, in respect of the consecutive days on which they have ceased working allowances, money or other benefits paid under a provincial plan because of pregnancy or for one or more of their new-born children or children placed with them for the purpose of adoption;
- Had income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the twelve months prior to their application date.

On 15 April 2020, the government expanded the eligibility criteria to:

- Allow individuals to earn up to \$1,000 per month while also collecting the CERB.

- Extend CERB to seasonal workers who have exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to undertake their regular seasonal work because of COVID-19.
- Extend CERB to individuals who have recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job because of COVID-19.

Prior to this change in eligibility criteria, CERB eligibility criteria also required that the applicant expect to be without earnings for at least fourteen consecutive days in an initial four-week period, and have no earnings subsequently. As of April 15, 2020 applicants no longer need to meet this criteria.

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